CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1 through 8 (canceled)

9. (Currently amended) A method for desalinating salt-containing water, which comprises the steps of:

(a) passing salt-containing water through a heat exchanger disposed in a basin containing solar-heated brine formed by several layers of water lying one above the other in the basin, each of said layers of water forming the brine having a higher salt content than the layer present there above, wherein the heat exchanger is disposed in the lowermost layer of water having a [[high]] higher temperature than the temperature of the layers of water lying above the lowermost layer of water;

(b) heating the salt-containing water in the basin using ~~solar energy~~ indirect heat exchange with the solar-heated brine to obtain heated salt-containing water;

(c) evaporating at least part of the heated salt-containing water to obtain water vapor; and

(d) condensing the water vapor to obtain desalinated water.

Claims 10 and 11 (canceled)

12. (Previously presented) The method for desalinating salt-containing water defined in claim 9 wherein according to step (a) the water to be desalinated is supplied to the heat exchanger disposed in the basin from a pit holding the salt-containing water, in which pit a second heat exchanger is disposed, through which the condensed desalinated water obtained according to step (d) is passed to preheat the salt-containing water by indirect heat exchange.

13. (Previously presented) The method for desalinating salt-containing water defined in claim 9 wherein according to step (d) the water vapor is condensed in a condenser, in which a cooler for supplying cool air is connected to the condenser.

14. (New) A method for desalinating salt-containing water, which comprises the steps of:

(a) passing salt-containing water through a heat exchanger disposed in a basin containing solar-heated brine formed by several layers of water lying one above the other in the basin, each of said layers of water forming the brine having a higher salt content than the layer present there above, wherein the heat exchanger is disposed in the lowermost layer of water forming the brine having a higher temperature than the temperature of the layers of water forming the brine lying above the lowermost layer of water and wherein the brine in the basin contains a lower level

of water having a salt content of ± 24%,a middle layer of water having a salt content of ± 15% and an upper layer of water having a salt content of ± 0-4%;

(b) heating the salt-containing water in the basin using indirect heat exchange with the solar-heated brine to obtain heated salt-containing water;

(c) evaporating at least part of the heated salt-containing water to obtain water vapor; and

(d) condensing the water vapor to obtain desalinated water.

15. (New) The method for desalinating salt-containing water defined in claim 14 wherein each of the layers of water is formed to a height of ± 1 m.

16. (New) A plant for desalinating salt-containing water, the plant comprising:

(a) a basin containing solar-heated brine formed by several layers of water lying one above the other in the basin, each of the layers of water having a higher salt content than the layer present thereabove;

(b) an indirect heat exchanger in the lowermost layer of water in the basin, having an inlet for receiving the salt-containing water and an outlet for discharging the salt-containing water heated by indirect heat exchange;

(c) means for supplying the salt-containing water to be desalinated connected to the inlet in the indirect heat exchanger; and

(d) means for evaporating the heated salt-containing water discharged from the indirect heat exchanger through the outlet.

17. (New) A plant according to claim 16 wherein the plant comprises a pit to which the salt-containing water to be desalinated is supplied and from which the water is carried to the inlet of the indirect heat exchanger that is disposed in the basin.

18. (New) A plant according to claim 16 wherein the means for evaporating the salt-containing water is connected to a condenser, and the plant comprises a pump by means of which water that has condensed in the condenser can be transported to a receiving basin for the water.